

Appl. No. 09/980,326
Atty. Docket No. 7629
Amdt. dated 12/11/2003
Reply to Office Action of 9/30/03
Customer No. 27752

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 1-11 and 25-33 are canceled as being redundant in view of the amended claims now presented. Claims 12-24 are now in the case. Claim 12 has been amended to specify the circularity, aspect ratio and product thereof for the granular detergent composition made by the claimed process. Basis is at page 12, l. 5-12 and l. 20-25. Claim 12 also specifies that the process uses particles of spray-dried granules and agglomerates. Basis is at page 5, l. 7-9. Claim 12 further specifies passing the mixture into a fluidized bed granulator and introducing a binder into the granulator. Basis is at page 5, l. 24-34. Claim 12 has been further amended to recite the operating conditions of the fluidized bed granulator. Basis is at page 7, first full paragraph and lines 30-31. Claim 17 has been amended to recite step (f), rather than a "screening" step, per §112, discussed below. It is submitted that these amendments add no new matter, and entry is requested.

Rejection Under 35 USC 112

Claim 17 stands rejected, for reasons of record at page 6 of the Office Action.

It is submitted that the amendment of Claim 17 fully meets this rejection. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection are requested.

Rejection Under 35 USC 102

Claims 12, 13, 14, 17, 18, 21, 26-30 and 33 stand rejected over U.S. 4,828,721, for reasons of record at page 2 of the Office Action.

Claims 12-14, 18, 21, 26-30 and 33 stand rejected over U.S. 4,726,908, for reasons of record at pages 2-3 of the Office Action.

Applicants respectfully traverse all §102 rejections, to the extent they may apply to the claims as amended herewith.

It is submitted that neither '721 nor '908 teaches all elements of the present claims, to wit:

- 1.) The defining parameters of the product; and/or
- 2.) The dual spray-dried/agglomerates feed stream; and/or
- 3.) The operating parameters of the fluidized bed agglomerator.

Absent these disclosures, it is submitted that neither '721 nor '908 anticipates the present invention in the sense of §102. Withdrawal of the rejections on this basis is requested.

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Rejections of Claims 31 and 32

The rejections of these claims have been obviated by their cancellation.

Rejections Under 35 USC 102/103

Claims 13-30 and 33 stand rejected over U.S. 5,489,392, under §102 or §103, for reasons of record at pages 4-5 of the Office Action.

Applicants respectfully traverse the rejections on this basis.

At the outset, it is noted that the same comments regarding §102 made above with respect to '721 and '908 also hold true for the '392 document. Accordingly, it is submitted that §102 is not a proper grounds for rejecting the amended claims now in the case over '392. Withdrawal of the rejection on this basis is also requested.

Moreover, it is submitted that '392 does not suggest the present invention in the sense of §103.

Attention is directed to the fact that the granular detergent compositions herein are being made in a fluidized bed granulator. In sharp contrast, the compositions of '392 are being manufactured in a mixer/densifier. (Col. 4, l. 45 and l. 58-63) It is only after agglomeration occurs that the compositions of '392 may be fed into a "conditioning apparatus", such as a fluidized bed. (Col. 5, l. 31-35)

Accordingly, and different from the present invention, agglomeration in '392 is not conducted in a fluidized bed having a binder introduced therein in the form of droplets (step (d) of the present process).

Moreover, nothing in '392 relates to the operational parameters of the fluidized bed, such that it would necessarily produce granular compositions having the circularity, aspect ratio, etc., in the manner of the present process.

In view of the foregoing, reconsideration and withdrawal of all rejections of the claims over '392 are requested.

In light of the foregoing, early and favorable action on all amended claims is requested.

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